Guidance for Consent Readability

Review your consent with your group. Take a section or two and revise it using the tips below as guidance.

Questions to ask as you are reviewing your informed consent:

1. Who is the target population?
   • What issues or concerns might be specific to these participants (ie. literacy, vulnerable population)?

   Comments: ______________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

2. Will the intended population understand this consent?
   • Is the consent at a 6-8th grade reading level?
   • Is it appropriate for the intended audience (ie. intellectual disability, elderly population, non-native English speakers)?

   Comments: ______________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

3. What are your primary concerns with this consent?
   • ________________________________________________________________
   • ________________________________________________________________
   • ________________________________________________________________
   • ________________________________________________________________
   • ________________________________________________________________
4. Does the consent include medical terminology, technical jargon, or overly complex terms?
   - Medical terms should be revised into lay language (i.e., the term “Hypertension” could be changed to “high blood pressure” or “Venipuncture” can be changed to “needle stick” or “blood draw”).
   - Complex terms can also be revised (i.e., “Syncope” to “faint”).

  Comments: ____________________________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________________

5. Would the participants understand the study procedures? How can you make the procedures easier to understand?
   - Create a bulleted list
   - Bold or underline crucial information
   - Make a table or chart
   - Use diagrams and pictures

  Comments: ____________________________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________________

6. What other revisions can you make to improve the consent’s readability?
   - Use shorter sentences
   - Limit sentences to one idea
   - Use words with 3 syllables or less
   - Use active verbs
   - Don’t be redundant
   - Explain terminology

  Comments: ____________________________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________________

Informed Consent Form Checklist created as a guidance tool by Appalachian State University’s Office of Research Protections